



THE MASSACRE OF THE CHINESE AT ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING.—DRAWN BY T. DE THULSTRUP FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIEUTENANT C. A. BOOTH, SEVENTH UNITED STATES INFANTRY.—[SEE PAGE 638.]

# THE MASSARE OF THE CHINESE AT ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1885

**Three Years After The Chinese Exclusion Act in Effect**

Label and Captioning by  
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## THE CHASE OF THE CHINESE.

At Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory, the Union Pacific Railroad Company has coal mines from which is taken the fuel for the general use of the road. The coal is mined more easily than that in the East, lies nearer the surface, and is not so dangerous in working, so that Chinese labor is more available even than in the metal mines. Up to ten years since the company worked its own mines with white labor only, paying from eight dollars to ten dollars per day. The workmen struck for higher wages, and the company changed its policy, and let the mines to contractors. These contractors have for some time been bringing in Chinamen to work the mines, and the number has increased, until at the beginning of September it had reached six hundred or more at Rock Springs, with more at the neighboring mines. The Chinamen were paid the same wages as the whites, and all were paid by the piece, but the Chinamen were not able to do as much in the same time as the whites.

On the 3d of September there was a quarrel in one of the "rooms" in the mine between some whites and some Chinamen as to who had the right to work there. Four Chinamen were wounded, one fatally. After the quarrel all the miners "came out," and work was abandoned. The Chinamen went to their quarter, known as "Chinatown." The whites armed themselves with rifles, shot-guns, and revolvers, "to protect themselves from the Chinese," they said. After dinner that day the saloons were all closed, and the white miners held a meeting in the streets, at which it was decided that "John must go, then and there." The way in which John was made to go is described by the *Rock Springs Independent*, a paper that fully sustains the resolution of the miners, and throws the responsibility for their action upon the railroad company, which brought the Chinese to the Springs.

The substance of the *Independent's* story is as follows: The miners, sixty or seventy armed and the rest stragglers, advanced on Chinatown, driving in the Chinese section men as they went. When near the "town," warning was sent to the Chinese to "leave in an hour," which the latter prepared busily to do. "But the men grew impatient. They thought John was too slow in getting out, and might be preparing to defend his position. In about half an hour an advance was made on the enemy's works, with much shooting and shouting. The hint was sufficient. Without offering any resistance, the Chinamen snatched up whatever they could lay their hands on and started east on a run. Some were bareheaded and barefooted, others carried a small bundle in a handkerchief, while a number had rolls of bedding. They fled like a flock of sheep, scrambling and tumbling down the steep banks of Bitter Creek, then through the sage-brush and over the railroad, and up into the hills east of Burning Mountain. Some of the men were engaged in

searching the houses and driving out the stray Chinamen who were in hiding, while others followed up the retreating Chinamen, encouraging their flight with showers of bullets fired over their heads."

This is the miners' organ's account of the work. It shows that the Chinese offered absolutely no resistance, and that the whites were not drunk. When the Chinese quarter was apparently empty, the miners set fire to it. "Half choked with fire and smoke, numbers of Chinamen came rushing from the burning buildings, and with blankets and bed-quilts over their heads to protect them from stray rifle-shots, they followed their retreating brothers into the hills at the top of their speed." "All the night long the sound of rifle and revolver was heard, and the surrounding hills were lit by the glare of the burning houses." The net result of the "stray rifle-shots" and "showers of balls fired over the heads" of the fugitives will never be exactly known. A coroner's jury sat on fifteen dead bodies, and returned a verdict that "eleven had been burned to death and four shot by parties unknown to the jury." The utter fiendishness of the mob was almost inconceivable. The miners' newspaper says of the men who perished in the flames: "From the position of some of the bodies it would seem as if they had begun to dig a hole in the cellar to hide themselves. But the fire overtook them when about half-way in the hole, burning their lower extremities to a crisp, and leaving the upper portion of their bodies untouched. At the east end of Chinatown a body was found charred by the flames and mutilated by hogs. The smell that arose from the smoking ruins was horribly suggestive of burning flesh." Nothing could add to the severity of the condemnation which these brutally frank admissions suggest.

Governor WARREN, of Wyoming Territory, has shown no sympathy with the rioters. He has done all he could to bring them to justice, and twenty of their leaders have been arrested. The Governor repaired instantly to the town, telegraphed to Washington for Federal troops, and, until they arrived, used his influence at no small personal risk to protect the Chinamen from further persecution. Just a week almost to an hour after the assault on Chinatown had been made, there were 650 Chinese, including many of the fugitives, brought back under guard of 200 United States soldiers, and set to work. Some of them began to dig in the ruins of their houses, and it is said that as much as \$12,000 was unearthed, which the "hated Chinese" had managed to save on the same wages as were received by the "superior" race, though on smaller daily earnings. The miners who "came out" from work on the morning of the 3d of September, and spent the day and night in the pleasures of the chase, will not go back.